

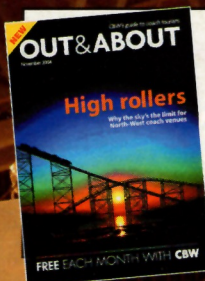
THIS WEEK

CRW

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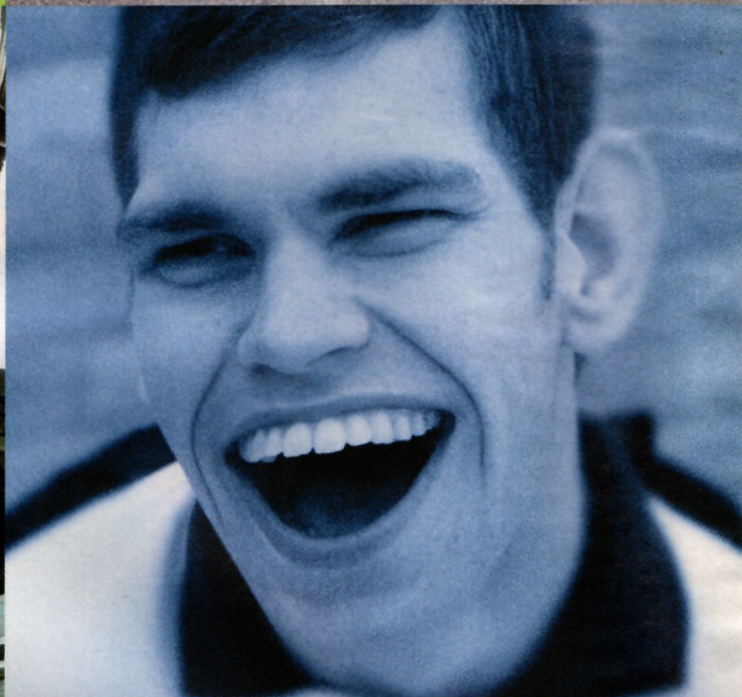
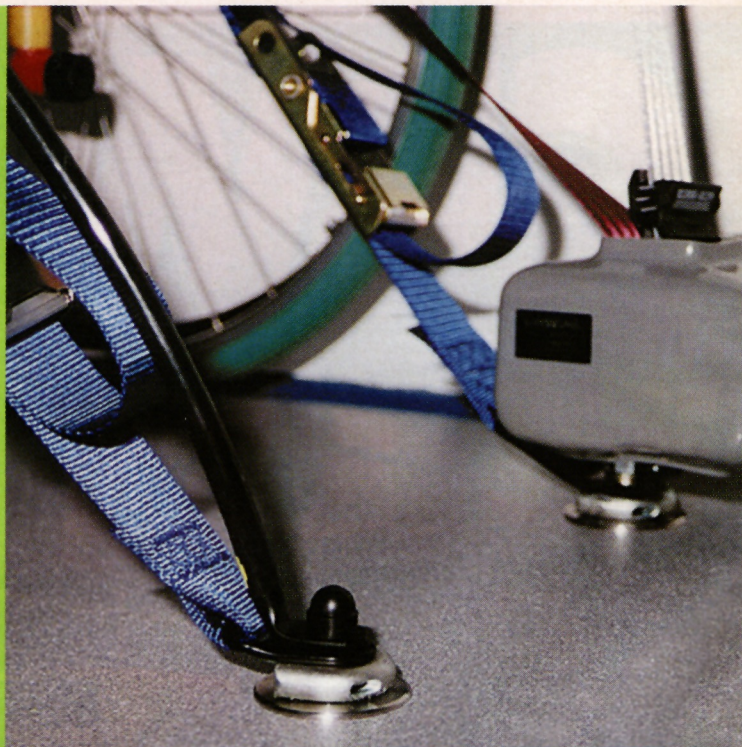
Aztecbird loses its wings - pages 4-5

Latest SMMT figures in depth - pages 8-9

On with the show

Last Coach & Bus heralds new future for event

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CBW says

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Red tape nightmare

OUT of the blue, I got a press release last week informing me that, as of this moment, VOSA has set up a one-stop shop to replace the Traffic Area Office enquiry numbers.

I don't want to blight the new hotline (0870 6060 440, if you need it) at inception but, since we are told it redirects you to the TAOs, it is likely to represent the same quality of service, at national call rates. And that might mean more for less.

As the year progresses, I come across ever more evidence that operators are being failed by the administration at some of the TAOs: "My application to increase our discs took more than 14 months to complete," one operator has complained to me.

An application to register a new route, sent in early July, has still not received even the courtesy of a reply, despite repeated e-mails and calls to the TAO, says another.

Look at Doug Sturman's letter on page 18: "There is no reason for not 'advertising' well in advance as the matters which bring about the inquiry are usually months old," says Doug. And I wholeheartedly agree, yet Eastern Area's Notices & Proceedings dated October 27 announces a PI on the 29th.

I brought up some of these points with a transport solicitor: "The administration at

TAOs is awful," he said. "I have noticed a palpable deterioration in the last year. Just getting a response from them is difficult. And they make endless mistakes."

'I have noticed a deterioration in the last year. Just getting a response from them is difficult. And they make endless mistakes'

Since the comment I made last week about public inquiries, we have had a flutter of letters about the administration problems that seem to originate at certain TAOs - but in the spirit of constructive criticism, I'd like to hear more.

This isn't an opportunity to malign individuals or castigate particular offices but a chance for operators to explain their difficulties and be assured that this magazine will communicate them, preserving your

anonymity, to the very highest level of VOSA's management.

Please drop me a line at mark.williams@emap.com, by letter or call me on 01733 467776. Be prepared with a few facts and dates. Though I will need your name and address, be reassured that all letters and calls will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

● **WHAT** is it about the clocks that are fitted to coaches that makes them so unreliable? Apart from those on new vehicles, I cannot remember seeing one in working order.

As a schoolboy, I remember noticing that the clockwork effort on our Duple Vega school bus never showed the right time, and it looks as if we haven't progressed in the last 35 years. Only a couple of weeks ago, I was on a coach that showed the time, digitally, to be 3142hrs.

It's high time manufacturers stopped buying their clocks at the local pound shop. And operators, if your coach's clock stops working, it doesn't take much effort to nip out and buy a clock from the pound shop...

Mark Williams, Editor



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CBW
For all CBW contact names and phone numbers please turn to page 18

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Aztecbird loses wings

ANDREW JAROSZ CORRESPONDENT

Leeds coach operation focuses on uncertain future

AZTECBIRD Coaches, of Low Mills, Guiseley, Leeds, is believed to have gone into liquidation at the start of November.

Some of its bus services, operated under contract to Metro, have been assigned to a new operator, Pegasus.com, which has also taken on some of the drivers needed to operate the buses.

No further details are known at the time of going to press but it is believed that directors Graham and Julia Navy have already returned some of the 16 or so buses and coaches to leasing companies, although one Optare Solo, owned by Metro, has been transferred to the new company, which is based at nearby Springhead Mills.

Former director Simon Robey



Solo delivered in February this year now transferred to Pegasus.com

said that, when he got wind of the intention to liquidate, he left the company to ensure that existing contracts moved to another operator. He said that Pegasus.com operated five coaches and was owned by Dave

Horseman and the six bus workings were being looked after by himself in an advisory capacity. He said that Pegasus had operated from the same premises and was essentially a very small coach operation.

Aztecbird emerged out of Cactuswood, trading as Wharfedale Coaches in 1994 and specialised in corporate hire and 'band buses'. In recent years it gained a few local service contracts, including the prestigious 757 service from Leeds to Otley via Leeds Bradford International Airport (LBA). This contract has just changed hands through tendering to First but Aztecbird gained a new service 737 from Bradford to LBA, which started last week.

Mr Robey said the 757 had been steadily built up by the independent operator and was then snatched by First, which put in a low bid. He also suggested that the loss of this four-vehicle contract could have contributed to Aztecbird's woes.

Pegasus.com now operates six buses on contract to Metro, four of which are Optare Solos owned by Metro, and two of which are hired for the Otley to Guiseley service.

Attempts by CBW to contact Aztecbird and Pegasus.com by phone have so far been unsuccessful.

Coach&Bus show gets 7,800 visitors

DESPITE concerns about the lack of vehicle manufacturers at last week's Coach&Bus show, held in Birmingham's NEC, almost 8,000 people went through the gates during the three-day event.

With a target of 6,000 visitors, it seems likely the show was helped

by the adjacent Railtex 2004 show, which covered the rail industry. Exhibitors report sales from the show far in excess of expectations.

Show-goers got the chance to hear how Coach&Bus is the last of its kind, to be replaced by a

'domestic' ride-and-drive show next year, and a European-flavour event in 2006, run concurrently with both Railtex and Passenger Transport Solutions - the public transport technology show.

● See pages 21-32 for a full review of the show

Minibuses face speed limiters from January

FROM January 1 next year, all buses weighing more than five tonnes must be fitted with speed limiters from new, irrespective of their duties.

The announcement forms part of the Department for Transport's implementation of an EU directive and will be set by amendment of the Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986. There is an implementation period that lasts until 2008, and the DfT has suggested it will 'tidy' PSV-related areas after then.

While complex, the new regulations also say that buses weighing

between five and seven and a half tonnes first used on or after October 1 2001 and before January 1 next year must be retrofitted with limiters by January 2006 though, if they are used only in the UK.

Fitting of a limiter will exclude vehicles from the outside lane of three- or four-lane motorways and goods vehicles weighing more than three and a half tonnes will be fitted with 90km/h limiters.

Coaches weighing more than ten tonnes used before January 2005 can retain a 'set speed' not



exceeding 100km/h and vehicles not able to reach this speed are exempt from the regulations.

Speed limiters must be fitted to all 5-tonne minibuses by 2008, irrespective of operation

NEW SPEED LIMITER RULES

Vehicle type	Requirement	Comment/Exemption
New bus exceeding five tonnes GVW first used on or after January 1 2005	From new	Irrespective of operation
New bus not exceeding five tonnes GVW first used on or after January 1 2005	From new	Not needed until January 1 2008 if used for national operation only
Bus between five and seven and a half tonnes GVW first used on or after October 1 2001 and before January 1 2005	Retrofit by January 1 2006	Not needed until January 1 2007 if used for national operations only
Bus between seven and a half and ten tonnes GVW first used on or after October 1 2001 and before January 1 2005	Re-set by January 1 2006	Not needed until January 1 2007 if used for national operations only
Bus not exceeding five tonnes GVW and first used on or after October 2001 and before January 1 2005	Retrofit by January 1 2006	Not needed until January 1 2007 if used for national operations only

Weavaway buys Haywards

WEAWAY TRAVEL has acquired the Hayward's Coaches business in Reading.

The Newbury-based company has taken Hayward's four coaches, its offices and operating centre and all the driving staff has transferred to the new owner.

Hayward's had been established in Reading for 35 years and built up a solid private hire and school contract portfolio. Weavaway began operating in 1997 with just

two coaches and rapidly expanded to a fleet of 26 after acquiring Alfa Travel from Bennetts of Newbury in 2001. It currently runs large numbers of home-to-school contracts and a private charter in Reading.

A pair of Weavaway's Bova Futuras has been re-branded into the new Haywards Reading & Basingstoke livery.

Simon Weaver, partner, said: "This is a tremendous starting

point for us to explore business opportunities we have identified in both towns. By expanding Haywards' coverage into Basingstoke we are effectively creating a new player in the marketplace - offering a quality product. The Basingstoke operation will be serviced from our nearby Greenham Common depot."

Weavaway is a firm believer in product definition through brand recognition. The company's stage carriage operations carry the Newbury & District title and its 106-seat ex-Hong Kong double-decker school bus fleet has been painted yellow and is branded 'Noah Vale'. Four new Plaxton Profile 70-seater school coaches in Weavaway's private charter fleet have been separately branded as 'Class of the 70s' while its main frontline fleet carries the slogan 'A World of a Difference'.

Mr Weaver added: "The totally new Hayward's identity will fit neatly into our overall strategy and enable us to continue to grow the private charter side of the business. We believe in the 'family firm' ethos we share with Haywards Coaches and know our clients appreciate the personal attention and high quality service that results from it."



Fleet safety seminars start

THE long-running series of Managing Fleet Seminars kicked off on October 28, and early indications are that delegates found it tremendously useful.

Consultant fleet manager at Fleet21 George Emmerson guided attendees through the Duty of Care legislation, including the offences and consequences of ignoring it, how to survive a police or HSE investigation, managing the risk and audit trails. He also looked at the rules and regulations on employee-owned cars used for business.

Chevin Fleet Solutions sponsored the event, and sales and marketing director Scott Jenkins says: "Very little is known about the Duty of Care legislation and it can be an absolute minefield if you get caught out. We wanted to ensure that the fleet industry is fully aware of the implications and show how easy it really is to ensure the welfare of its employees."

VOSA hotline launched

IN A surprise announcement, the Vehicle Operator and Services Agency (VOSA) overnight introduced a national number to contact all Traffic Area Offices this month.

From November 1, all enquiries to the TAOs have, or at least, should have been dealt with by the new national-rate number, 0870 60 60 440. Streamlining of VOSA's organisation is said to be the reason for the decision to change the policy on enquiries (previously, all it needed was a call to the relevant TAO) and because many calls can be answered by a national line. Specifically, the new number can be used to answer

any of the following enquiries:

- To confirm whether a vehicle is exempt from plating and testing
- Check the status of a vehicle
- Advice on the Construction & Use Regulations
- Find out the Standards of Test for Class V vehicles
- Make a test booking appointment
- Report a smoky vehicle
- Pass information to intelligence officers
- Advice on the Working Time Directive

The line is open between 0730-1730hrs Monday to Friday and 0800-1430hrs on Saturdays.

First introduces Rainbow fares

BERKSHIRE-LONDON Green Line coach services are to trial an experimental fares structure.

First's Green Line services 700, 701, 702 and X7 are to pioneer the new Rainbow fares where each journey throughout the day has a different colour code and each colour is represented by a different

price. Seven colours will be used - as in a rainbow, and fares will range from violet - £1 single - to red - £11 day return.

First says historical data shows off-peak travel drops during the winter - largely because the number of tourists leaving London to visit Windsor falls away.

NEWS IN BRIEF

First wins award

First in Aberdeen won Public Transport Operator of the Year at November 1's Scottish Transport Awards. It follows investment of £4 million in 20 new artics, and improved safety and staff training.

Roads shock

A report by Audit Scotland says more than £1.7 billion is needed to upgrade Scottish roads and clear a ten-year maintenance backlog. It found 66% of A-roads and 55% of B-roads were in 'acceptable' condition.

Commission cut

Transport for London is to reduce the commission paid on the sale of travelcards sold overseas by VisitBritain call centres and by members of the British Incoming Tour Operators Association by 50%.

TWM currys favour

Travel West Midlands is sending out 40,000 publicity leaflets to highlight the city's 'Balti Triangle'. The operator is keen to encourage people to visit restaurants by bus, and discount vouchers for eight Baltis are included.

Mersey bus boost

A new bus service linking areas of Liverpool with the city's airport was launched by Transport Minister Tony McNulty last week. It was backed with more than £500,000 from the Department for Transport's Urban Bus Challenge, secured in a partnership between Merseytravel and Arriva North West and Wales.

100th CompoBus

Optare parent company NABI has delivered its 100th CompoBus to Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The all-composite, 45-foot bus is powered by compressed natural gas on a high-capacity rapid transit route.

Agent of Year

Humberside Tail Lifts won the 'Agent of the Year' category at the Ratcliff Tail Lift Agents' conference in Palma last month.

Mark of Excellence

The second Operation Safer Travel 'Mark of Excellence' certificate for 2004 has been awarded to the Wolverhampton Community Safety Partnership (WCSP). The body has worked with staff from Travel West Midlands and Midland Metro to cut anti-social behaviour on buses and trams.

Metro school buses launched

ANDREW JAROSZ CORRESPONDENT

'Vehicles achieving over 90% modal shift'

WEST Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro) launched the first of its 30 Turkish-built BMC1100 FE type school buses on three workings in Bradford last week - claiming that at least one of its pilot schemes is achieving modal shift of over 90%.

Metro is expanding its county-wide Yellow Bus school transport scheme by acquiring up to 30 BMC vehicles to develop its yellow bus services across all five districts in the county. The buses form part of a larger order for 150 buses, funded by a successful

£18.7m bid to the Department for Transport, which will enter service during the next three years and be allocated to operators who will drive and service them.

Metro first introduced American Blue Bird bus schemes in Hebden Bridge two years ago and now has 11 pilot schemes using 23 dedicated buses serving 42 schools.

The new BMC 60-seaters operate under Metro's 'My bus' brand, which is the overall identity for its specialised home-to-school transport service.

They are powered by a



The first vehicles are operated by First Calderline and serve one secondary school and three primary schools

Cummins 4.3-litre engine developing 170 bhp, have a rear tail-lift and, after some more modifications, will be additionally certified as 56-seaters plus one wheelchair. Special hatches in the roof provide additional emergency exits and each bus has a radio/CD player and a six-camera CCTV system.

An example was on display at the recent Coach&Bus Show.

The first vehicles are operated by First Calderline and serve one secondary school and three primary schools in the Nab Wood and Heaton areas of Bradford District. The secondary school contract was passed over from First Bradford and over 150 pupils paying individual fares use that service. The three new buses then service three primary schools on specially tailored routes, which are brand new, and already carry nearly 100 pupils. The shift from parent's cars to bus on these routes is already estimated at 75%, although the one scheme in Brighouse has a 91% shift.

Further contracts for Todmorden and Huddersfield schools have been won by First Calderline and start in January with an additional six buses. By the end of that month 11 buses will have been purchased with the remainder for the year coming by April.



The new BMC 60-seaters operate under Metro's 'My bus' brand

CTC in Paris

The COACH Tourism Council sent a contingent to the annual MIT International show in Paris at the end of last month, working hard to negotiate 2005 deals.

The show was held in the Paris Expo-Porte de Versailles on October 20-23. Over 1,100 companies were present, 830 from France and 320 from abroad representing 117 countries. Ten thousand visitors attended, 2,000 from outside France. As well as the tourism exhibition there was a coach manufacturers and equipment hall.

Environmental charges spark Volvo order

ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGES laid on Stockholm from next summer are expected to see drivers park their cars on the outskirts and use park-&-ride-style services to and from work.

To cope with expected demand, 184 Volvo articulated buses have been ordered.

Stockholm is to run a trial before the implementation of the charge, effectively levied on a congestion-charging zone. Drivers travelling in or out of Stockholm during working hours on weekdays will have to pay a

fee. The authorities hope large numbers will park their cars and travel by public transport instead.

Volvo Buses will supply nearly all of the estimated requirement for 200 new buses. The 184 articulated bus order has been placed by three operators. It is Volvo Buses' largest ever order in Sweden for deliveries in a single year.

"Everyone knows that the environment is improved if more passengers travel by bus instead of car," says Stefan Guttman, CEO of Volvo Buses Sweden. "I hope that our new, modern buses will

help more drivers in Stockholm discover the advantages of travelling by bus."

The order comprises 175 Volvo 8500 LEAs. They measure 18.7m and are powered by nine-litre diesel engines, located in the front section of the bus. The chassis is manufactured in Sweden and the bodywork will be produced by Volvo's Saffle subsidiary. The remaining nine buses will be the Volvo 7700 models with natural gas engines. Delivery will commence in February and conclude in August 2005.

Zinc battery trial proves a success

AROTECH CORPORATION has successfully completed a first test drive with its all-electric hybrid bus using commercially available zinc battery technology.

Incorporated in Delaware, the company has subsidiaries in a number of US states and in Israel. It supplies defence and security equipment, vehicles, simulators and battery technology to the US armed forces.

The system was said to have demonstrated performance similar to that achieved with proprietary dendritic zinc used to date. Corroborating lab results, the bus achieved a range of 133 miles on a simulated city-cycle drive, similar to the range achieved 12 months previously in a similar test with the proprietary zinc.

Arotech's Electric Vehicle Division developed technology to allow its zinc-air batteries to use commercially available zinc, eliminating the need for expensive spe-

cial zinc used to date. It represents a technological breakthrough for utilising readily available zinc and is expected to boost commercialisation plans for zinc-air hybrid buses, which until now, required heavy investment in zinc-producing infrastructure.

"Rising fuel prices increase the chances of this technology becoming a reality," said Robert S. Ehrlich, Arotech chairman and CEO. "We are now investigating ways to capitalise on this new breakthrough technology."

The electric bus is powered by Arotech's Electric Fuel zinc air technology. It is coupled with a pack of advanced ultra capacitors and an energy management system. There are no tailpipe emissions so an urban transit fleet based around the Electric Fuel bus promises to improve air quality.

Testing proved the bus, measuring 40 feet long and with a 20-tonne GVW, had a range of 130-

145 miles under typical city bus driving conditions, including stop and go, acceleration and constant speed running - enough for most daily citybus operations. Tests also included typical system demands like the constant operation of air conditioning, door operation, etc. Arotech believes the vehicle has sufficient range to offer a practical alternative to diesel-powered buses.



Bus has range of up to 145 miles

Excel hit by vandalism

A BUS company is being plagued by gangs of youths who throw stones through vehicle windows and risk the lives of passengers.

Excel Coaches, which operates from Stansted Airport, has had problems with some of the services it operates in the Bishop's Stortford area.

Some coaches have been put out of action by the vandals. The company started trading in July 2003 and runs a mixed fleet of about 20 coaches and buses. About three months later one bus had its window smashed. On average there has been one incident a month. During the summer and half term holidays the attacks have become more and more regular. On one occasion three buses were vandalised in one day.

In the most recent incident a bus was attacked twice in the same day as it travelled between Epping and Stansted. Managing director Grayham Hayden said: "Things have been getting worse and worse and now they are escalating."

"The vandals are attacking loaded buses and some passengers have been covered with glass. The glass used in the buses is designed to smash into squares. Fortunately no drivers or passengers have been hurt."

Management buys lift firm

ACCESSIBILITY SPECIALIST Passenger Lift Services (PLS) has undergone a management buy-out.

The new management team consists of Tony Bull, managing director; Mike Pett, sales director; Colin Thomas, commercial director; and Adam Beck, engineering director.

Mr Bull said: "The current owners were stepping back from the business and looking for an exit passage. We were able to raise the funding to acquire the business in its entirety - including all the overseas interests."

Mr Bull said sales in Europe had recently been very strong and new product development had seen them move into the frontline ambulance market with a specially adapted lift concept.

Its successful operation has led to major orders with ambulance services including London, Lancashire, Hampshire, Essex and the RAF - among others.

PLS is also planning to launch a new passenger lift for coaches in early 2005. The unit will have fully automatic operation - including the deployment and stowing of the safety handrails.

Optare targets Europe with new Benelux sales office

OPTARE HAS launched an export drive into Europe supported by the establishment of a sales office in Eindhoven.

Jos van der Putten, 48, has been appointed general manager for the Benelux operation and will target sales at customers in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. He was previously associated for ten years with Dennis and, latterly, TransBus in a similar role. Prior to joining Dennis, Mr van der Putten spent ten years with DAF Trucks and has close con-

nections with many European coach and bus builders.

Optare's commercial director, Paul Chapman, said: "Winning sales on the continent is a key part of our future strategy - so being able to recruit someone with such good contacts and market knowledge as Jos van der Putten was critical. We are confident the Solo is the right vehicle to begin targeting European customers with and some of our other models, notably the new Tempo, should have strong appeal, too."

EVENTS

- November 9-12: CTA Show, G-Mex. 0870 774 3586
- November 10: Managing Fleet Safety Seminar, Birmingham. 0800 977 4088
- November 13: John Hughes Lecture; Crossley Motors, Gardens Hotel, Manchester. 0161 432 8241, email osnwyorks@ntlworld.com
- November 16: Quality Bus Contracts: The Legal & Financial Implications, CBI Conference Centre, London. 01224 263 164
- November 16-17: TRICS Transport and Development Conference, Regents Park Marriott Hotel, London. 020 7391 7013
- November 18: Bus Industry Awards presentations, London Hilton Hotel, Park Lane. 0870 900 1450
- Nov 20-21: Coach and Bus 2004, RDS Simmonscourt Pavilion, Dublin, 00353 (0) 42 9663462, www.cttc.ie
- November 24: Accessibility Requirements; Question Time, Volvo Bus, Warwick. 0207 240 3131
- November 24: Managing Fleet Safety Seminar, Manchester. 0800 977 4088
- November 25-26: Moving On; Public Transport, joining it up, Liverpool Town Hall. 0191 241 4523
- November 26: Centennial of Midland Red, Black Country Transport Museum, Dudley, West Midlands. Normal admission to venue
- November 30: Sustainable Development of the North West of England, Renaissance Manchester Hotel. 0207 787 1210
- December 9: Impact of Disability Discrimination Legislation, Victoria Park Plaza Hotel, London. 0207 787 1210

2005

- January 8: Excursions 2005, Alexandra Palace, north London. 023 8062 5500
- January 27: CPT Annual Dinner, Hilton, Park Lane, London. katea@cpt-uk.org
- March 1: Managing Fleet Safety Seminar, Glasgow. 0800 977 4088
- March 2-3: British Travel Trade Fair, NEC. www.britishtraveltradefair.com
- March 15-17: Bonded Coach Holidays Conference, Callela, Spain. karenh@cpt-uk.org
- March 22: Managing Fleet Safety Seminar, Belfast. 0800 977 4088

Coaches up, buses down

MARK WILLIAMS EDITOR

Overall figures for year to date drop almost 6%

WITH the overall figures for new coach and bus registrations for the year to date down almost 6%, coach registrations show some improvement.

New coach registrations for the month - typically a slow month for sales - are comparable to 2003 but the first ten months of the year show a rise of 8.3%. Bus registrations, on the other hand, are down by almost 11%.

Among the month's movers and shakers are Volvo, Optare and MAN, seeing additional chassis sales, and BMC gets its name on the board. Scania's drop last month isn't reflected in its year-to-date coach sales figures - up mas-

sively from last year's 55 to 129 in the first ten months of the year. Volvo hasn't fared as well in coaches, losing almost 60 of last year's 265 total.

Setra has managed to almost double its year-to-date coach sales total, and fellow Daimler Chrysler company Mercedes-Benz has picked up a respectable number of bus sales.

With big bus orders expected soon, the figures may show a slight fillip by the end of the year. Renewed confidence in the coach sector is beginning to have an effect but, until early 2005, deliveries begin to show up, the degree of confidence won't be apparent.



Operators like Rondo Travel (see full story page 34-35) have contributed to Setra's rise in sales

COACH AND BUS REGISTRATIONS

Manufacturer	Oct-04	Oct-03	YTD 2004	YTD 2003
Volvo	116	95	926	907
TransBus	1	11	689	11
Scania	30	54	375	380
Optare	50	26	349	314
Mercedes-Benz	10	12	190	166
Irisbus	6	25	185	325
VDL Bus	14	13	171	269
Alexander Dennis	58	0	121	0
MAN	31	22	94	88
Bova	3	3	73	65
BMC	7	0	55	1
Dennis	0	78	6	1031
Other British	0	0	0	0
Other Imports	5	3	166	58
Total British	224	204	1,919	2,210
Total Imports	107	138	1,481	1,405
Total	331	342	3,400	3,615

Bus Registrations

Volvo	95	649	71	567
Alexander Dennis	58	121	0	0
Optare	50	349	26	314
Scania	28	216	44	281
MAN	22	62	18	71
VDL Bus	11	11	0	0
BMC	5	35	0	1
Mercedes-Benz	4	143	7	116
Irisbus	2	67	7	129
DAF Bus	1	121	9	227
Transbus	1	663	11	11
Dennis	0	2	77	1,000
Total buses	277	2,439	270	2,717

Coach Registrations

Volvo	21	277	24	340
MAN	9	32	4	17

Mercedes-Benz	6	47	5	50
Irisbus	4	118	18	196
Sitcar	4	32	3	22
Bova	3	73	3	65
BMC	2	20	0	0
DAF Bus	2	35	4	42
Scania	2	159	10	99
Caetano Toyota	0	24	0	13
Dennis	0	4	1	31
Setra	0	50	0	22
Transbus	0	26	0	0
VDL Bus	0	4	0	0
Other European	1	60	0	1
Total coaches	54	961	72	898

Rolling figures

	3 months to date	%change	6 months to date	%change
Total	910	-6.80%	1,948	-1.46%
Buses	732	-7.10%	1,479	-3.70%
Coaches	178	-5.80%	469	5.90%

New bus and coach registrations in the United Kingdom - 2004

Oct	% change	YTD 2004	% change	Rolling yr	Oct 04
Total bus/coach	331	-3.20%	3,400	-5.90%	4,127
All buses	1,312	14.00%	5,819	-10.90%	11,714
All coaches	86	-1.10%	695	8.30%	1,086

Single deck buses					
Minibus to 3.5t	912	10.90%	3,611	-16.80%	6,960
3.5 - 8.5t	113	13.00%	828	28.80%	1,868
8.5 - 16t	88	20.50%	530	10.40%	1,062
16t +	52	116.70%	213	-9.00%	457
Single deck total	1,165	14.30%	5,182	-9.00%	10,201

16t+ Double deck	147	11.40%	637	-24.00%	1,367
Coaches 3.5 - 16t	21	90.00%	138	40.80%	222
Coaches 16t+	65	-14.50%	557	2.40%	864

Dublin Bus driver sent for trial over five deaths at stop

THE case of a 48-year-old driver for Dublin Bus, charged with dangerous driving leading to death, has been sent forward to the Circuit Criminal Court for trial.

Five people were killed and more than a dozen injured when an out-of-service double-decker bus mounted the pavement at Wellington Quay in Dublin city centre in February last.

A report into the accident, the worst in the history of the company, was produced in association with independent experts, but publication is being withheld while legal proceedings contin-

ue. The driver, who worked from Conyngham Road depot, has been remanded on continuing bail. The vehicle involved remains in the custody of the Garda Technical Bureau.

Stagecoach drivers' courtesy

STAGECOACH BUS drivers have contributed to Perth's success in achieving a nationwide award for courtesy in the city.

Perth, the home of Stagecoach Group's international headquarters, has been awarded '21st Century City of Courtesy' status and is the first community in Scotland to achieve the award.

The award is presented by The Campaign for Courtesy (CfC), which compiled evidence over two years and made a number of lengthy visits to Perth. CfC said it was impressed by Perth's people and facilities. Notably CfC said the atmosphere on Perth buses was typically relaxed and cheerful.

Drivers were commended for their high degree of efficiency

and patience and the report added that they are "commendable for their important contribution to the everyday life of Perth citizens."

Robert Andrew, deputy director for Stagecoach Scotland, said: "We are delighted that the high standard of our drivers has helped Perth get UK-wide recognition. Our drivers are crucial in helping us deliver lifeline bus services, not just in Perth, but all across the country. They also give up their own free time to do a lot of important work in the community."

"We hope this award will encourage even more visitors to come to the Fair City, as well as attracting more people to make use of the excellent bus services."

First maintains profitability

FIRSTGROUP'S interim results to September 30 2004 report a strong performance resulting in share earnings and dividend up 10%.

Restructuring within the bus division has seen underlying profits increase, with London operations continuing to perform strongly. Rail operations were performing ahead of expectations and US-based First Student has experienced continued growth. Acquisitions have doubled the size of First Services.

Group turnover rose 7.0% from £1,127.7m to £1,207.3m, with operating profits climbing from £78.1m to £84m. Pre-tax profits were £62.1m against £56.8m in 2003. The UK Bus operation employs 9,300 vehicles and carries an average 2.8m passengers per day. Its turnover was up 7.0% from £443m to £473.1m. Operating profits before the element of leasing costs slipped from £46.2m to £45.4m. First says these results were impacted by around £3m attributable to a strike in South Yorkshire.

Investment in improving reliability through enhanced engineering



practices has also cost another £3m, which resulted in operating profits slipping from 10.4% to 9.6%. Restructuring saw the removal of a layer of divisional management designed to allow greater focus on service delivery.

Chairman Martin Gilbert said driver recruitment, efficiency and retention remained a high priority. He maintained First had introduced numerous initiatives at local level to address the issue, including recruitment of drivers and engineers from an alternative labour market, with approximately 80 drivers and engineers from Poland joining bus operations in the South West.

Popin for new Swindon service

THREE Stagecoach Swindon routes are being upgraded to encourage more passengers to use them in a scheme branded as Popin.

Routes 6, 7 and 8, connecting Kingsdown, Highworth and Freshbrook to Swindon town centre now have a ten-minute frequency timetable from 0730hrs to 1800hrs Monday-Saturday, extra morning and evening buses, and lowfloor buses.



Local MP Julia Drown launched Swindon's Popin scheme at the start of November

Coming Next Week

Road test

We put Irizar's 13-metre PB to the test. Does it stretch expectations? Find out in the next issue.



CTA show review



CBW reports on latest vehicles at the CTA's annual show in Manchester

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Cambridge bus use outstrips London

MARTIN COLE TECHNICAL EDITOR
DEBBIE COWAN CORRESPONDENT

Stagecoach says passenger numbers have risen 45% since 2001

CAMBRIDGE has demonstrated an unprecedented rise in bus passenger growth, with figures up almost 50% in three years and outstripping even the passenger increases recorded in London.

The city's main operator, Stagecoach, is carrying an average of more than 117,000 passengers a week on its 'citi' branded network.

Recent DfT statistics show passenger volumes in London increased 25% between 2000-01 and 2003-04. Passenger growth on Stagecoach services in Cambridge from 2001 to 2004 has been 45%.

Stagecoach says passengers have flooded on to Cambridge services following its £4 million-plus investment in 40 new low-floor buses, a simplified network and fares structure, ten-minute turn-up-and-go services, comprehensive marketing and improved information.

Patronage has also been stimulated thanks to a strong partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and other local organisations and businesses, which aided the introduction of strategic bus priority measures.

Stagecoach claims to have carried more than 5.5 million passengers in 12 months on its fleet of 52 buses covering seven citi routes. Around 3.8 million passengers travelled by bus in Cambridge before the improvements to the bus network in November 2001.

Brian Souter, Stagecoach Group chief executive, said: "This is one of the most remarkable public transport success stories ever seen in the UK - and even more impressive than the growth achieved in London. Stagecoach took a significant commercial risk



Stagecoach is carrying an average of more than 117,000 passengers a week on its 'citi' branded network

by investing millions of pounds three years ago in a long-term strategy to encourage bus use in Cambridge, particularly among car users, and that has delivered spectacular results.

"Stagecoach has been supported by an extremely proactive and forward-looking local authority in Cambridgeshire County Council as well as other agencies. This strong partnership has delivered to people in Cambridge one of the best bus networks in the UK. We believe the approach taken in Cambridge is a model for cities in the rest of the UK and we are planning further innovative services for the city and other locations across the country in the future."

Since its original investment, Stagecoach has worked closely with the county council to improve service delivery in Cambridge and target resources on areas where they are offering the greatest potential to boost passenger volumes. The 'citi' network has also been widened to include villages such as Cottenham,

Sawston and Bar Hill.

Another initiative has been the development of a dedicated bus terminus at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Two years ago, there was only one large layby to cope with 50 buses an hour calling at a site generating significant amounts of traffic. A partnership between the NHS Trust, the county council and Stagecoach saw the conversion of a hospital car park into a dedicated bus terminus. As well as benefiting patients and visitors, staff members at the hospital now make 10,000 trips a week to work by bus.

Services in Cambridge have grown to such an extent that there are now 18 services an hour linking the city centre to the main railway station, providing a major boost to integrated transport.

There has also been a significant growth in car users using the five award-winning park-&-ride services in and around Cambridge, where every one of the 20 buses used by Stagecoach has lowfloor access for people with disabilities and parents with

young children.

Stagecoach's success isn't just in Cambridge - its Winchester operation is proving worthwhile, too. Investment of £1 million in buses has led to a huge increase in passenger numbers. Stagecoach South has seen a 20% rise on one of its main routes since it boosted its service. Now other routes could be in line for an increased service following this success.

In November 2003, the company invested the seven-figure sum by putting 12 new vehicles on routes in Winchester city centre and outlying areas. Twelve months on, the Winchester Highways and Transport Panel was recently told that one route saw a 20% rise after bus frequency was increased from four to six an hour. Andrew Dyer, managing director of Stagecoach South, said: "Route number 5 links Winchester city centre to various areas and the new vehicles and increased frequency have produced a 20% rise. This is very, very positive feedback."

Exams body gains three-year government contract for CPCs

EXAMINING body OCR has successfully renewed its contract with the Department for Transport to deliver Certificate of Professional Competence examinations for three more years.

The new contract starts on September 1 2005 and will allow OCR to widen the access to the CPC qualifications through a partnership with learndirect. Over 25,000 CPC examination

results are issued annually and the new agreement will increase the number of centres offering quality training to CPC candidates.

Information regarding the syl-

labus, administrative or general enquiries on vocational qualifications, is available from OCR's information bureau on 02476 851509 or website www.ocr.org.uk

WAVEVIEW



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In Dublin's fair city...

Forget the girls for the moment, here's what's on at the Coach & Bus Show Dublin 2004

GABRIEL CONWAY

IRELAND'S Coach & Bus Show 2004 is rapidly approaching.

With stand space fully booked despite a 36% increase in size from the 2002 show, as well as the participation of key manufacturers and suppliers, it looks like being an event that no one in the business can afford to miss.

The show is run on a bi-annual basis by the CTTC (Coach Tourism & Transport Council of Ireland) and its growth is seen by show manager Paul Morton as an indicator of the dramatic changes in the market for independent coach and bus operators in the Republic.

He said: "It used to be that many of the private-sector operators sourced their vehicles from the UK, often from the second-hand market, the volume of new coach sales to the Republic was relatively small, and we had to look to the UK for many of the specialist and support services.

"This has changed completely over the last decade, with operators large and small ordering new coaches, plus the relaxation of service licensing has created a market for new buses outside the traditional semi-state operators, and the numbers of indigenous sales and service operations are multiplying. With the Coach & Bus Show in 2002 I think we demonstrated that we could provide a platform for the operators and the suppliers to come together that was equal to the UK shows to which Irish operators would travel to do business. This year I think we're going to do even better and make it worthwhile for UK businesses to come the other way."

That the major manufacturers consider it worthwhile to come to Ireland is amply illustrated by the presence at the show of Volvo, Setra, Scania, VDL/DAF, EvoBus, ELC and Caetano, alongside native builders or conversions experts such as Eurocoach, and KVC/Esker.

DAF Ireland will be showing a range of coaches with VanHool and Marcopolo bodywork, as well as a Temsa-bodied vehicle which they say "may well tempt operators with a combination of affordability, economy, and proven European components." Bruce Archer and the team from DAF will be exhibiting alongside their Irish importer Bartons, who will also be showcasing the Plaxton Cheetah, and the BMC Probus.

Volvo will be displaying the B12B, which has been gaining much ground in Ireland this year, with a substantial order from semi-state operator Bus Eireann and a number of sales in the private sector. The B7RLE/Wrights combination will also feature, and Volvo is confi-



The 'Tart with the Cart', alias Molly Malone, beckons operators to Ireland's capital

dent that initial sales to Halpennys and interest from Bus Eireann will be followed up.

A number of distributors and dealerships will also be on hand offering complete and tailored sales and support packages, including Lenister Vehicles at 12P4, Cronin Motors at 26L, Moseley in the South at 24 and 35P2.

As well as new vehicles, just about every kind of support service will feature at the show, from the Windscreen Centre and LOOK CCTV at stands 13 and 14L, through parts (Carlyle 17L, Heavy Duty Parts 23LL), refurbishment (Ardee Coach Trim at 21LL), finance and insurance (Bank of Ireland, Bank of Scotland, Grogan Insurance) to specialist clothing suppliers and IT (Distinctive Systems at 06L).

It's not all about spending money either - Bus Media at stand 12L is a rapidly growing Irish operation which will provide you with an extra revenue stream by selling advertising space on your fleet, be they bus or coach. Stephen Dunne and his team are already responsible for selling space on high-profile Dublin independents such as Mortons and Bartons, and have recently introduced a range of illuminated adverts lit by LED which are not only eye-catching but also commanding premium advertising rates.

Bus Eireann, the largest operator and biggest purchaser of new coaches in Ireland, is also at the show, on stand 08P5 but, apart from being a semi-state operator, they are also a major provider of contracted work to independents around the country, and worth a visit.

Advice and support is also on hand from PAMBO (the Private Association of Motor

Bus Operators) at stand 07P4, while the Department of Transport at stand 31 and 32P5 can provide information on licensing processes and standards to the industry and, as the body promoting the change to metric speed limits in the Republic from January 22, is also an essential port of call for UK or overseas operators sending tours to Ireland.

For tour operators, a visit to the Guinness Storehouse stand (28P5) will also be worthwhile, for a new take on one of Dublin's best known visitor attractions.

Last but not least, CBW will be at the show, with an unbeatable subscription offer.

Coach & Bus Ireland is held on Saturday and Sunday November 20-21 2004, at the Simmonscourt Pavilion in the RDS Ballsbridge.

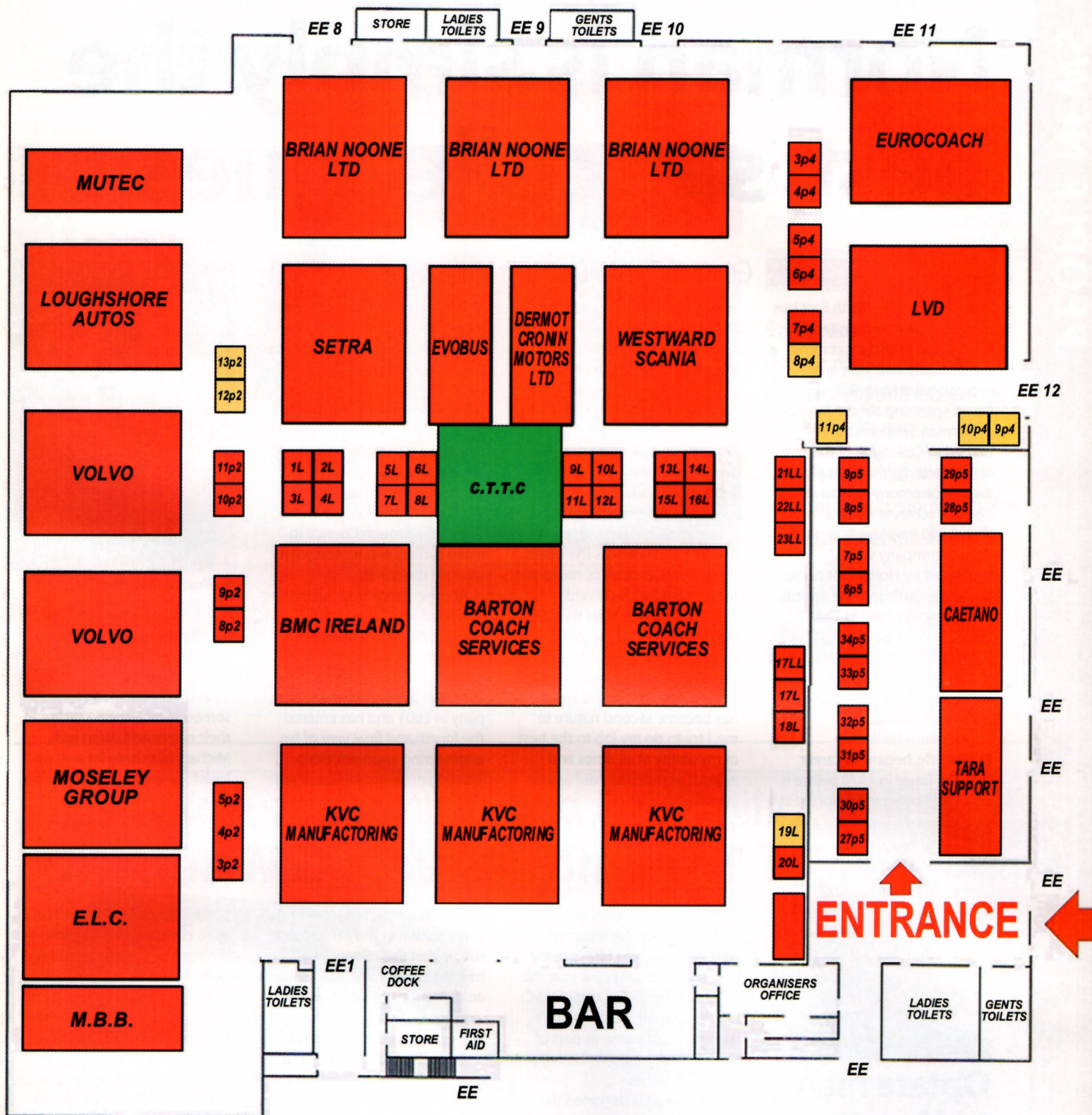
To get to the show from Dublin Airport, take the frequent Aircoach service for Ballsbridge/Donnybrook - the bright blue coaches depart from directly outside the arrivals area every ten minutes. Several routes are operated, so be sure to tell the driver you want to go to the RDS.

From Dublin City Centre you can take Dublin Bus services 5, 7, 7A, and 63 (from O'Connell Street and Nassau Street) or 45, 84 (from Corn Exchange Place and Nassau Street).

A special accommodation offer for CTTC members is available at the West County Hotel, with two nights dinner and B&B for only 119 per person.

Contact Aine Grogan on +353 1 626 4011 for details.

● **Details of the show are available at www.cttc.ie**



COACH & BUS IRELAND - NOVEMBER 20-21, RDS, DUBLIN

Exhibitor	Stand	Exhibitor	Stand	Exhibitor	Stand
KVC Manufacturing	21L, 22L, 23L	Leinster Vehicles	12P4	Politecnica	33P5, 34P5
Brian Noone Limited	30L, 31L, 32L, 33L	Volvo	22P2, 23P2	Clarke Auto Wash	27P5, 30P5
JF Dunne Insurances	08L	Specialised PSV	03L	Eberspacher	29P5
Windscreens Centres	13L	ERG Transit Systems	11L	Guinness Storehouse	28P5
Dept of Transport	31P5, 32P5	Bus Media	12L	Ardee Coach Trim	21LL, 22LL
EvoBus (UK)	27L, 28LL	Wiper Services	07L	Bus Eireann	08P5
Campion Insurances	15L, 16L	Euro Coach Builders	13P4	Midland Body Builders	27P2
LOOK CCTV	14L	Loughshore Autos	21P2	RPA	04L
Davy Engineering Limited	01L	MTB Equipment	20L	ICDA	Tourism Village
Distinctive Systems	06L	Adtec Aerauto	09L, 10L	Moseley in the South	24P2 and 25P2
Westward Scania	29L	Gogan Insurances	09P5	Greg Quirk	06P5
Bartons Coach Services	28L	Mobile Brush Wash	02L	Salvador Caetano	10P5
Barton DAF	24L	Bank of Scotland	18L	Leisure Ware	05L
Cronin Motors	26L	Bank of Ireland	07P5	David Rees	11P2
Dermot Cronin Motors	10P2	East Lincs	26P2	Tag Tronics	03P2
DAF Ireland	25L	Caryle Bus Parts	17L, 17LL	Heavy Duty Parts	23LL
		Mutec	20P2	Pambo	07P4
				Stertil UK Ltd	06P4

Norman is simply the best, say colleagues

ANDY RODEN REPORTER

A SEMI-retired Go North East bus driver has been recognised for his dedication to duty, commitment to customer care and exceptional driving skills during a career spanning almost 35 years.

Norman Simpson, 66, was named as Colleague of the Year at Go North East's first staff awards ceremony held to recognise the achievements of more than 2,200 employees at nine depots company wide.

Hosted by North-East comedian Bobby Pattinson, the awards ceremony was held at The Elephant on the Tyne in Gateshead and represents the latest initiative designed to improve employee relations and boost staff morale.

Norman, who lives in Eaglescliffe, began his career with OK Travel in 1970 before it was taken over by Go North East

Go North East holds first staff awards ceremony

in 1995 and, since working for the latter, has become a recognisable face for bus passengers in and around Bishop Auckland.

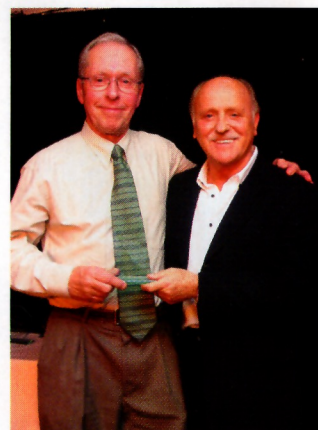
Norman credits his family for his success as a driver and claims driving is "in his blood" - his grandparents once owned their own bus company, Florence's Tours, and his uncles were themselves bus drivers. He says: "I am extremely humbled that my fellow colleagues across the board think highly enough of me to put me forward for this award.

"This is the very first time Go North East has held a staff awards ceremony and I am honoured that I was recognised for doing a job I enjoy and which has become second nature to me. I try to do my job to the best of my ability at all times and enjoy it as much as I did when I started out in 1970.

"Nowadays, drivers face much more pressure but I try not to let this phase me and still enjoy getting behind the wheel and taking to the road."

In his spare time, Norman is a keen motorcyclist and is a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM). He also helps to run Ride Well, a scheme organised by Cleveland Police and Stockton Borough Council to make cyclists and motorcyclists safer on the roads.

Another employee celebrating an award was 22 year-old Michael Burn from Newcastle who was named Apprentice of the Year. Michael, based at Winlaton depot, joined the company in 2001 and has entered the fourth and final year of his engineering apprenticeship. Training manager Ian Coull said: "Michael deserves every bit of



Dedicated: Norman Simpson

recognition he has received. He has been keen and willing to learn from the start and is set for a bright future.

"It is very satisfying to see someone take the first steps in their career and do so well. Michael has come far and we look forward to him continuing as a skilled engineer."



Optare man to Moseley

FORMER Optare man Lee McMahon is Moseley PCV's new sales executive, covering the East Midlands, Yorkshire and North-West England.

Training delivers GM benefits

INCREASING numbers of First's staff across Greater Manchester will have access to high quality vocational training now that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has recognised the company's training programme as part of the national Employer Training Pilot (ETP) project.

The project is designed to assist businesses achieve improved organisational performance through provision of training employees need to perform well. It looks at the business costs incurred in providing such training and provides assistance.

For First the effect of Manchester participation in the ETP project will be that the current annual training budget will go further, so enabling the company to provide access to high quality training for even more employees.

Administered locally by the Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council in partnership with Business Link North Manchester, Chamber Business Enterprises and TUC Learning Services, the ETP project ensures that flexible support and train is available to enable employees to address any basic and/or voca-

tional skills gaps, and the company to consequently improve its business performance and service to customers.

ETP recognition also reflects the company's commitment to the aims and objectives of Lifelong Learning as recently demonstrated with the opening of the £35,000, Queen's Road, Cheetham Hill depot's Lifelong Learning Centre. This facility, which is supported by TUC Learning Services, Logistics College North West, and City College Manchester, will be used to deliver courses and training.

Radio expert takes on new outdoor media role

DAVE Stankler has been appointed group sales and marketing director for outdoor media specialist Adgroup - based in Harrogate.

Adgroup comprises of a range of brands including Adbus with operations across the UK, Malta,

Portugal, and soon to launch in Spain, and Adsite airport, ferry racecourse and leisure advertising.

Dave has over 25 years of media experience including senior roles within radio and advertising agency sectors, and recent-

ly moved to Adgroup after three years as MD of an Oldham-based commercial radio station.

Dave said: "I thoroughly enjoyed my time at The Revolution, seeing the station grow from strength to strength, and am looking forward to a

new challenge within a rapidly growing sales operation. I am excited about working in one of the fastest growing industries in the UK."



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Licensing Legal

Operator in strong attack on VOSA

DC gives 48-hour suspension over Christmas

Maintenance

COACH and bus operator John Chadwick has launched a strong attack on VOSA (the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency) - after he was summoned to a public inquiry for the second time this year.

Mr Chadwick, director of Countywide Travel, of Oakley Road, Basingstoke, Hants, appeared before a disciplinary hearing after defects were found on three of his coaches by vehicle examiners.

He was given a verbal warning at a previous inquiry in January and this week had his O-licence suspended for two days at a second hearing in Alton, Hants.

Jonathan Black, deputy traffic commissioner for the Western Traffic Area, was told that three of Mr Chadwick's vehicles were deemed unroadworthy by vehicle examiner Roger Milverton when he visited his premises on August 12 this year.

Attention had been brought to Mr Chadwick's company after a 53-seater coach of his had failed a spot check during a visit to the New Forest Show the previous month.

But Mr Chadwick claimed in a statement after the inquiry verdict that his company had been singled out unfairly by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency.

The case was brought under Section 16 and 17 of the Public Passages Vehicle Act and further legislation under a 1985 act.

The statement said: "This hearing has been convened as a direct consequence of an incident on July 29 when a vehicle inspector issued a prohibition to one of

this company's coaches because of an insecure passenger seat.

"Unfortunately we were unable to take up his offer to have the fitting tightened there and then but authority was given to allow the vehicle to complete its day's schedule, providing the offending pair of seats were not used.

"Clearly there was no life-threatening mechanical defect to steering or brakes that would have justifiably warranted a public hearing but one pair of seats out of a total of 25 that was not properly secured to the body-side of the vehicle.

"This isolated incident somehow leads our friends at VOSA to conclude that the drivers' walk-around inspection is ineffective or not carried out.

"In fact the explanation to this situation is straightforward. The vehicle concerned had last been used on July 22 when schools and colleges finished for the academic year and was not intended to see further use until its next MOT inspection the next month.

"On July 29 we had a public excursion to the New Forest Show and the driver was using one of our other coaches. Unfortunately this developed a fault and the driver was instructed to return to the depot and change to another coach.

"A replacement vehicle was brought into the yard by a member of staff and left for him. When the excursion coach arrived the passengers promptly transferred to the replacement coach.

"Although the driver carried out his



Attention had been drawn to Mr Chadwick's company after a 53-seater coach of his had failed a spot check like this

routine walk around this coach he, not unreasonably in my view, thought it not in the best interests of public relations to disturb the passengers, who had already suffered some delay and had already taken their seats.

"I have to say I am frankly amazed that this comparatively innocuous occurrence should have provided a fleet check and a further public hearing.

"The taint of 'unfinished business' seems to colour the decision to reopen investigation into this company's record.

"VOSA officials would appear to have been disappointed that the deputy commissioner failed to award any substantive disciplinary action at the hearing in January 2004 as he had obviously been convinced that the component failure was more likely to have been a more recent occurrence rather than due to ineffective maintenance and inspection."

The hearing was told that Mr Chadwick had worked in the industry for more than



Prohibition was issued due to insecure seat

40 years and Countywide Travel has been providing services for schools, education authorities, local bus routes and private hire for nearly ten years.

Mr Milverton revealed at the inquiry that he was summoned to carry out a maintenance investigation of Mr Chadwick's vehicle premises in response to a request from a senior examiner two weeks after the incident at the New Forest Show.

He said: "I examined seven vehicles and found three to have defects. I issued one immediate prohibition notice, one delayed and one defect notice".

Mr Milverton said he had discovered a variety of faults with some of the vehicles, including a deteriorated brake hose, rear suspension problems and excessive movement on the steering joint of one of the coaches.

"Inspections are conducted at six-weekly intervals. I advised Mr Chadwick that, in my opinion, and, after roadside spot checks, the vehicles were unsatisfactory.

"Mr Chadwick agreed and said he was concerned with my findings and he would instigate additional morning spot checks of vehicles."

Mr Milverton added that Countywide Travel had prohibition history since the first hearing in January, leading up to the August inspection.

There had been a problem with one of Mr Chadwick's coaches' ventilation system on March 17 when it had been inspected while photographs were shown of the loose seat fitting that was discovered at the New Forest Show.

Mr Chadwick told the hearing, in mitigation, that changes had been made to the way his vehicles were now inspected since Mr Milverton's August visit.

He said: "Mr Milverton will be

the first to admit that all the recommendations he has made we have acted promptly on.

"As a result of the last visit and the concerns expressed about vehicle inspection there has been a reshuffling of my maintenance staff.

"The other concern was about the drivers. One thing I always thought was an extreme weakness were drivers being responsible for defects on vehicles.

'I have never known an inquiry being called over something so insignificant'

"It's more so in coaches but, in changing shifts there is little incentive in trying to carry that out. Under the new arrangement, one driver and the body repair man are to go around the whole fleet in the morning during weekdays to carry out checks."

Graham Ellis, a transport consultant, told the inquiry that Mr Chadwick had 24 vehicles on his O-licence and he offered a service for almost 365 days a year.

Mr Ellis said that Mr Chadwick had been quick to implement changes following VOSA's recommendations.

He said: "I think we have moved a long way. The call to answer the previous inquiry in January sent shock waves through the company.

"Large steps have been made and Mr Chadwick is extremely concerned at the defects Mr Milverton highlighted.

"He was very worried at the

level of defects that were found and were also spotted on the road by his inspectors and a large amount of cash has been injected in putting things right.

"Mr Chadwick was also concerned at his reputation being affected by having to appear at an inquiry for a second time. This is not an operator who has tried to dodge any issues or findings raised and I hope you take that into consideration in your verdict."

Mr Black, in delivering his verdict, said: "The changes you have made will obviously prevent incidents of this nature happening in the future.

"But I do have to take into account that there was a public inquiry earlier this year involving your company.

"You were given a warning of any consequence of defects from maintenance. I think this needs to be reflected on the record and you will have your licence suspended for 48 hours.

"Any vehicle must not be used for two consecutive days and you have until January 31 to fulfil the order.

"I have taken into account that, over Christmas and January, you can minimise the impact of what I have been saying."

Mr Chadwick said after the hearing that the ban would have little effect on his business because there was little work over the holiday period.

He added: "I have never known an inquiry being called over something so insignificant. The defects have now been repaired quite expensively but I think VOSA is trying to make a point.

"It's token action against me. I have a 48-hour suspension, which will take place on Christmas Day and Boxing Day because we don't work then anyway. It's all very sad."

Other decisions

NORTH WESTERN TRAFFIC AREA

LEEDS, October 04, 2004

Mohammed Khan T/A A1 Cars & Mini Buses, Nelson, Lancashire

● Action: S17 - Licence suspended for seven days with effect from 2359hrs on October 4 2004 to 2359hrs on October 11 2004

LEEDS, October 6, 2004

Selwyns Travel Ltd, Cheshire

● Action: Formal warning in respect of drivers' hours and tachograph failings.

LEEDS, October 06, 2004

David Robert Russell T/A

Darwen Coach Services, Lancashire

● Action: S17 - Condition attached - limited authorisation to ten vehicles from December 31 2004

NORTH EASTERN TRAFFIC AREA

LEEDS, October, 4 2004

Ronald Akenhead T/A Safari Travel, Tyne and Wear

● Action: PSV - Formal warning in respect of convictions sustained, prohibitions issued and undertakings not fulfilled

LEEDS, October, 8, 2004

Nazir Hussain T/A Concord Coaches, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire

● Action: Formal warning & undertakings



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I back random booze tests

From: Anon

Name and address supplied

While being in virtually full agreement with the sentiments in Frank Forster's editorial (CBW, October 28), there is one field in which official intervention would be desirable and constructive.

Traffic commissioner David Dixon has raised the subject of random alcohol testing and I strongly agree that this is desirable and necessary.

It is very difficult for an operator to monitor his employees, particularly in coaching where starting times vary and a driver often starts at a time when he is unsupervised.

It is unfortunate, but a good proportion of PSV drivers are also heavy social drinkers and I am certain that the morning after syndrome is very common.

I have personally had the situation where

my attention has been drawn to the fact that a driver's breath smells of booze in the morning. Unless his actions are also suspect, it is a very difficult situation to deal with.

In the face of a lack of a random testing policy, my only practical response was a Notice to Staff reminding them of their responsibilities in this matter and giving each of them a copy of a notice that I had to hand from National Express that clearly set out their views in understandable language.

I discussed this matter, informally, with my local police and they were very sympathetic but admitted they could not carry out a breath test unless they had good reason.

The most difficult part of the problem was that the suspected offenders could not see that there was a problem. One in particular used to depart from the yard, at lunchtime, in his car for an hour. On a number of occasions,

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I gave up my lunchtime to drive round the local hostelrys but never caught him in the act. A manager, or supervisor, is put in an impossible position in these circumstances if no random testing policy is in force and the thought of random tests being carried out by a third party, particularly before the driver has started driving, is both practical and fair.

Why not stop going to London?

**From: Youngs of Romsley
Halesowen, West Midlands**

I thought the article (CBW, October 14) about Manchester's new coach-parking scheme should give operators an idea of what a little co-operation can do.

If only they would all stand together and stop going to London. Just imagine the effect on tourism and the theatres. They would soon be screaming out for something to be done. I personally stopped doing trips to London some time ago unless people were prepared to pay silly money. It is the only way to treat a city that lives on tourists but does not want the coaches that take them.

Public Inquiries: system appears to be in hell of a mess

**From: Doug Sturman
Jireh Road Transport Specialist Services,
Woodbridge, Suffolk**

I refer to your article concerning publication of public inquiries (CBW, November 4).

I agree that the system appears in an administrative mess. As a transport consultant, representing goods and PSV operators at public inquiries in the Eastern, South Eastern & Metropolitan and Western Traffic Areas I have met similar problems.

I tend to phone operators to see if they might want to use my services. Up to the beginning of this year inquiries were 'advertised' well in advance and I would often be speaking to an

operator who had not received official notification. That has now changed in the three areas in which I work. SEMTA still advertises reasonably well in advance but Eastern & Western does not.

For some operators this causes difficulty because they don't know what or who is available to help them. If they don't belong to a trade organisation they are without guidance and their local solicitor probably doesn't have the necessary expertise.

There is no reason for not "advertising" well in advance as the matters which bring about the inquiry are usually months old.

It would be interesting to see what the various traffic areas have to say.

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Questions & Answers

The Editor, CBW, Emap Active, Bretton Court, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 8DZ e-mail mark.williams@emap.com

What do we do about attacks?

Q I see the number of attacks on drivers has increased. What can we do about it?
BG, London

A I think this is one of those questions where there is not a standard answer for all circumstances. I, therefore, offer a 'pick-and-mix' solution so operators can select the right elements for their operation.

Know your problem

Encourage staff to report all incidents no matter how minor. Record sufficient detail to give a complete picture (a standard form might assist). This information will help if a prosecution follows. Store the data in a form which permits easy analysis, probably a database or spreadsheet. Review the analysis regularly.

Risk assessment

Perform a thorough risk assessment of the foreseeable circumstances. Five standard steps:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be harmed and how (drivers, inspectors, passengers)?
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether you should reduce them further?
- Record the findings?
- Review the assessment as necessary.

The risk assessment should be a living document that is used to inform policy decisions. Act on it to reduce the number

and severity of assaults. Remember if you don't take adequate precautions to safeguard your staff, HSE might prosecute you, the employer.



Talk to your local police

Involve other stakeholders

Talk to:

- Your employees or their union representatives (they have a vested interest to protect themselves or their members)
- Your local police (the assailant may be guilty of other crimes against society)
- Your Local Authority (they might be looking for an excuse to introduce an ASBO or alcohol ban)
- The Head Teachers of local schools if incidents involve youngsters

Talk to your local Bench of Magistrates (they will sentence offenders following successful prosecutions).

Inform your local media (of prevention measures, successful prosecutions or reasons for withdrawing at risk services). There are probably others.

Equipment and training

Provide your drivers with adequate relevant resources to do the job. This need not be expensive nor complex, and might take two forms; deterrent and mitigation. For example:

- Training - suitable customer care/anger management courses might defuse a situation before an assault
- Whistle to summon help
- Personal panic alarm
- Disposable camera to photograph the assailant
- Swab kits to collect spit for DNA analysis
- Notebooks to record witness details
- CCTV to record the whole incident
- Two-way radio with alarm (silent or not) to base depot or police
- Mobile telephone to summon help
- Assault screens to protect the driver - Contact VOSA for more details
- Better security for money or off-bus ticketing

While these suggestions may or may not be suitable for your operation, the risk assessment will guide you to the correct solution. Reducing incidents must be a team effort based on facts and good management. In my opinion, you should always prosecute an offender. It sends the right message to staff, authorities and the general public that you are a caring company that takes the safety of its employees and passengers seriously.

Supervisors in France: what's the law?

Q When operating a school trip to France this year we were checked by the French police and ticked off for not having the teachers seated about the coach. What is the law on this, as we hope to be operating similar trips next year?
DM, Glasgow

A Most of this road safety 'law' in France is contained in the French version of our Highway Code and is known as the 'Code De La Route'. While both 'codes' deal with

best/recommended practice on road safety, the main difference is that most, if not all, of the French 'Code' is enforceable by the police by 'on-the-spot' fines. In this case, the French 'Code' requires that groups of children under 16 travelling by coach, must be supervised and that the 'supervisors' should be in a position within the vehicle to observe the behaviour of the children. It is for this reason that the supervisors (the teachers in your case) should be seated at a location which allows them to observe the activity within the coach and

to take any necessary controlling action to safeguard the children.

This is particularly important when the vehicle concerned is constructed with emergency exits which are activated by handles/levers, etc. The 'Code' requires that 'unaccompanied children' must not be allowed to travel in coach seats located by the coach's emergency door (or any other similarly activated secondary door. It follows that, in such circumstances, for safety reasons, the 'Code' would expect the group supervisors to be seated by the emergency/secondary doors/exits.

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Show's last stand



CPT director general Brian Nimick: 'Event buzzing but next year's show will be very different'

Coach&Bus 2004 was the last of its kind, as organisers announce new shows for 2005 and 2006. But it went out with a bang...

CPT director general, Brian Nimick, said consultation with suppliers and manufacturers had led to the conclusion that the market wanted two shows - a domestic ride-and-drive event and a European show, on alternate years.

"In the odd-numbered years, we agreed we needed a low-cost, supplier-based show," said Mr Nimick. "The trade event is highly valued. We've had a buzzing first day here at Coach&Bus 2004."

The new show structure starts next year, with Coach&Bus Live, staged October 5 and 6 to avoid clashing with next year's Kortrijk show in Belgium. The domestically-gearred event will have just 12 vehicle manufacture exhibitors, who will be given the opportunity to have vehicles outside for visitors to test-drive.

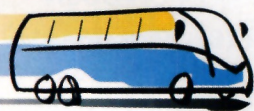
In 2006, EuroBUS Expo will cater for the European marketplace, and will be promoted to import and export manufacturers to encourage a pan-European feel.

"We have looked at 'competing' shows," said Mr Nimick. "The IAA event in Hanover we felt is big, impersonal, and bus and coach forms a small part of it. It's also expensive to attend."

"At Kortrijk, the venue is less than ideal, and is now at its capacity. The FIAA event in Madrid has a Southern European bias."

Mr Nimick said that EuroBUS Expo 2006 will have the additional draw of being aligned with two other major shows, running concurrently with it at the NEC. The same dates will be used for the massive Railtex fixed-track event and with Passenger Transport Solutions 2006 - a growing event, which focuses on passenger information systems and software.

Expo's Tony West said next year's Coach&Bus Live would be two-thirds the size of this year's Coach&Bus, with a ratio of around 40% vehicle stand space to supplier stands: "Outside, space for vehicle test driving is virtually unlimited," he told CBW. The event will be staged at Halls 17 and 18, with test circuits designed and run by UK Coach Rally organisers Coach Displays.



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Wright on target

Ulster manufacturer shows its answer to disabled access

WRIGHTBUS has tackled disabled access in a different way from other manufacturers.

The manufacturer showed its low-entry Commuter Coach, which is essentially aimed at inter-urban and commuter operations. It combines a high-floored saloon with a lowfloor forward section. It has an exceptionally wide entrance door and access ramp that allows a wheelchair passenger to board the vehicle, enter a space immediately inside the door and the chair and passenger can be secured by safety straps.

Although this allows the passenger to see out of the glass door at the side and through the low front windscreen, it does mean he or she is faced forward - which goes against the more traditional dictates that insist the passenger faces the rear and the chair is secured against a padded back-board to offer maximum protection in the event of a frontal impact accident or under emergency braking conditions.

The Commuter could easily be given a much higher specification for the saloon area to mimic that of a touring

coach and it displays considerable potential for dual-purpose operation.

● Wrightbus also launched its entry to the minibus market at Coach&Bus 2004 with a new collaboration with Irisbus.

The Satellite will be an accessible 24- or 28-seat vehicle based on the Irisbus LoGo chassis, using Iveco's recently-launched 3-litre HPT engine. The vehicle will feature an Allison World Series automatic gearbox, Telma retarder and disc brakes all round.

"It is widely accepted that a lot of operators of step-entrance, van-derived minibuses are having trouble finding a cost-effective replacement," said Sam McLaren, Wrightbus' commercial director. "The future of many marginal services could be jeopardised if those operators had to buy heavier-duty 10- or 10.5-tonne models to meet the needs of the Disability Discrimination Act."

Irisbus' new drop-centre frame is specially designed for the market, leaving Wright to coach-build a body. A prototype is expected to be complete by mid-2005.



Wrightbus also featured Eclipse Gemini decker

Praise for MCV's Evolution

MCV'S new Evolution is based on the MAN 14.220 and has been highly praised by Mike de Courcey, MD of De Courcey Travel. Mike already has six in operation, placed an order for an additional eight vehicles and then extended that order, at the show, for one more vehicle.

The Evolution has indeed evolved from the inherited Marshall Capital design but retains an element of the style that underlines its heritage. The front has been completely re-mod-

elled and is both modern and stylish in appearance. The cant rail has been raised to give more headroom inside the saloon - which particularly aids space at the rear, and the body developments have allowed internal width to increase by almost two inches yet the overall width remains the same at 2.46m.

MCV said it was to produce a dual-door version to London specification, which would be based on the 12.220 chassis which has a two-airbag rear suspension instead.



Myllennium is Richard's swansong

HAVING been transferred internally to a new division with MAN-ERF UK, the show was probably the last public appearance of Richard Noy - who has been a stalwart of the bus and coach industry for many years, but has transferred

to manage the company's marine engine interests and the associated spare parts support. Mr Noy had put an East Lancs Myllennium-bodied MAN 14.220 on his own stand and provided some support for BASE and MCV.

Safe driver takes a bow

THAKAR Dass Jassi was congratulated by CPT president Steve Telling on winning this year's Road Operators' Safety Council Safe Driver of the Year award.

Mr Jassi, who drives for Travel West Midlands, has driven an incredible 38 accident-free years, and was presented with a CBW-sponsored diploma and £500 cheque from Belmont International by Mr Telling.

Pictured are (left to right) Steve Telling, Belmont's Chris Morren, winner Thakar Dass Jassi, Belmont's John Ventress and Fiona Rodgers, and Peter Shipp



Operators mellow to yellow

IT RAPIDLY became clear at Coach&Bus 2004 that the key things on visitors' minds were high-capacity coaches for schools, or solutions to the impending DDA regulations affecting coaches.

Operators certainly made a beeline for anything painted yellow and were probably most impressed by the quality of finish on the sub-£100,000 Autosan Eagle.

The 12m Polish-built coach carried 67 seats and could be configured with 70. Its no-frills specification included belted,



Autosan Eagle-sub-£100,000 12m school coach



Autosan seats equipped with belts

moquette-covered, seating and full-length parcel racks incorporating a handrail. It was powered by a Cummins ISMe 220bhp engine and fitted with a ZF six-speed manual gearbox. Autosan says it will be available soon with an automatic option.

The Eagle was shown with a non-slip, easy-to-clean flooring material and no carpet. It has a wide access, a power-plug door, sliding-top window vents and an offside emergency exit.

Accompanying the Eagle was a fully specified touring coach version of the same body, which is called the Ramzes, and a

shorter midi-coach called the Gemini which was shown with 29 seats.

Also receiving a lot of attention were the Marcopolo-bodied, high-capacity coaches and 70-seat conversions offered by BASE. Ian Hall told CBW he was delighted by the fantastic response but said it was clear many operators had been leaving things a little late before considering how they were going to tackle the issues of accessibility.

One of the vehicles on the stand had been fitted with a mid-mounted PLS passenger lift to show one solution to the requirements.



Touring seats a winner

GRAMMER Seating has made significant inroads into the vehicle seating market in recent years and used the show to launch its latest 'Gran Turismo' coach-style seat (left) which offers high-levels of comfort combined with an attractive design and considerable

weight savings.

The Gran Turismo utilises a special Swedish high-strength, light-weight steel in its frame construction and employs extensive use of moulded plastic for the foam support. A typical double-seat placement saves six kilograms over a

conventional coach seat - potentially reducing the overall vehicle weight by up to 150kg - saving fuel or increasing the payload. It was developed by the former Lazzerini division of Grammer. The Lazzerini name has now been discontinued in favour of the corporate image.

CoachMarque shows its colours

A ROW of vehicles fielded by CPT members shared one thing in common - the CoachMarque logo.

Operators who have achieved the accreditation mark sent coaches to the event to demonstrate the quality of operation needed and talked to prospective members of the scheme to offer their first-hand experience of joining and of the marketing benefits.

"We had a number of very positive inquiries about Coach-

Marque, some of which we hope to convert to accreditation," said CPT's Alan Edmondson.

Corporate Coaching had a Sitcar Beluga on show, Alfa Travel a Dennis R chassis Plaxton Paragon, Rover European Travel fielded a Bova Futura, Excelsior of Bournemouth showed off a Sunsundegui Volvo, and there were other vehicles from Epsom Coaches, Shearings, Selwyns, Burtons and Tellings Golden Miller.



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Logans takes 12 Panthers

THE biggest order announced at Coach&Bus 2004 was for 12 Plaxton Panthers in 12.8-metre length for Logans Executive Travel of Northern Ireland.

The extra-long coaches, in Logans' Corporate Coaching livery, will be delivered next year, bringing Logans' front-line fleet of luxury vehicles up to 20... and every one a Scarborough-built coach.

"It's our latest move to progress the product we offer," said MD Sean Logan. "We wanted to have some extra length but we needed to stay on two axles - tri-axles tend to scrub tyres on the narrow and twisty roads in our area.

"Next spring, we'll be hiring a fleet of vehicles all of which are under 15 months old, and then will begin a policy of revision of the fleet every two

years."

Mr Logan told CBW that he was also interested in Plaxton's new 'baby' - the 10-metre Profile it is proposing in the new year: "The demand is there but we need to be sure the price differential and running costs reflect the reduced capacity," said Mr Logan.



Logans is a die-hard fan of Plaxton's coaches: "The build quality has been excellent with the current team and I find that they are very receptive to ideas," he said.

"That even extends on to the shop floor, where staff will approach you and ask what you think of what they are doing."

The Panthers will have air conditioning, floor-mounted toilet and Logans' own interior colour scheme. They will have 50 or 53 seats.

Somers consolidates

TIM Jackson of Somers Vehicle Lifts had nothing new but displayed a complete range including lifts, scissor table and axle or gear-box stands.

He said the company was going through a period of consolidation with all its products - having developed the existing products as far as they needed to go. He said: "We think we've done as much as we need to in terms of development. What we are concentrating on now is making them lighter and ways of making the build process more efficient."

NFBU 'reinvention'

THE NATIONAL Federation of Bus Users went through a 'reinvention' at the show, launching a new image it hopes will popularise its message.

"We've achieved a huge amount in 19 years," said NFBU chairman Caroline Cahm.

NFBU has now become Bus Users UK, with a new logo and an agenda that includes surgeries to address bus passenger issues.



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Olympus is to expand

OLYMPUS Coachcraft of Manchester displayed a pair of Mercedes-Benz Sprinters - one Diplomat specification 413CDI mini-coach for Express of Batley and a 416CDI shown in a plain silver livery.

It was fitted with a new style of leather seating but new side-glazing to replace the usual panoramic, tinted plant-on bonded windows had not arrived in time. The new design will feature flush-mounted windows.

Olympus has recently moved premises and begun an expansion programme. It has taken on a number of additional production staff and appointed a sales agent for the first time. There is also a move to embody a higher proportion of VW-based conversions in the build programme as the

company believes it offers the best after-sales and support package currently available.

Future developments are also on the cards and likely to involve a venture into coach-building with the assistance and expertise of an established producer - however, the company is remaining tight-lipped about this until a formal agreement has been established.



Hybrid on show

STAGECOACH'S Designline Olympus hybrid was the oddball right-hand-drive vehicle on the CPT's On The Move display.

It's set to debut on a service between Newcastle and Gateshead for PTE Nexus.

The hybrid Olympus uses a diesel turbine to top up the batteries, combined with regenerative braking. It's a 60-seater built in New Zealand.

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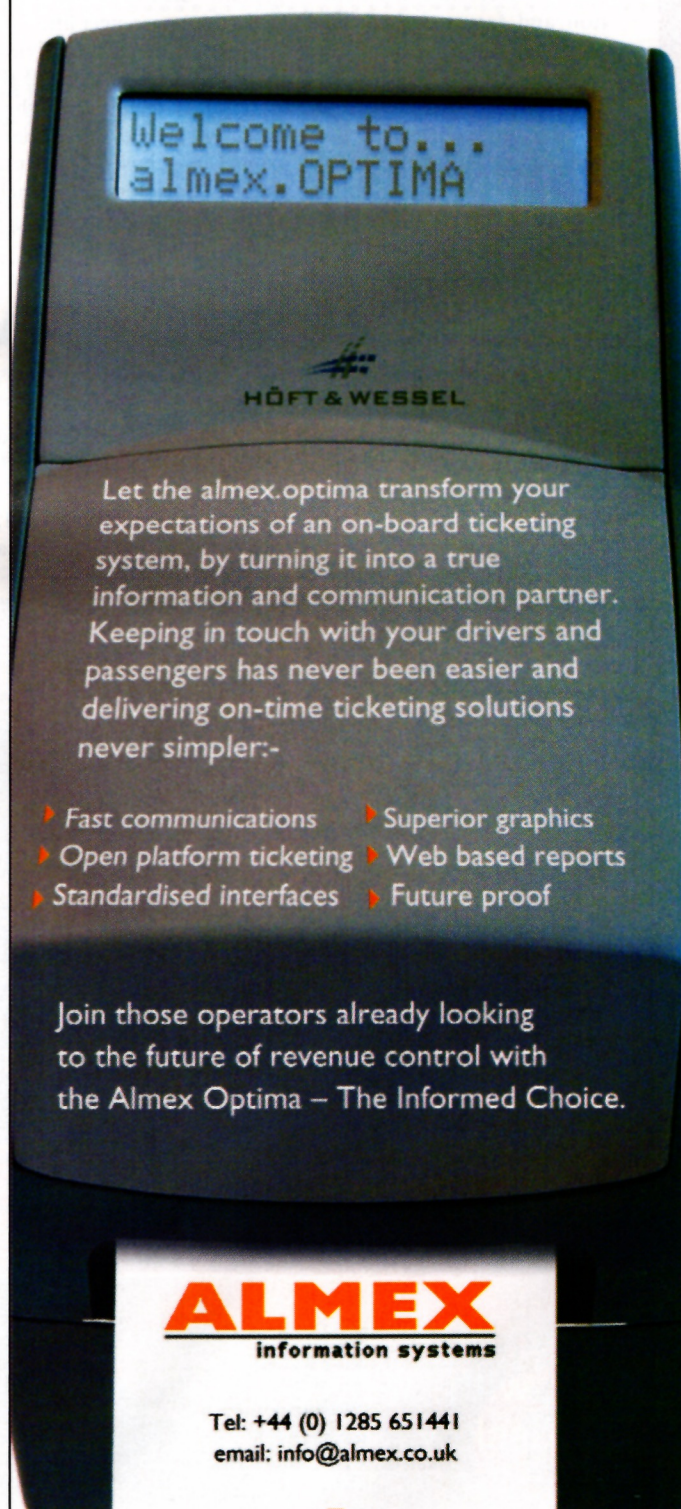
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Stanford wins orders

STANFORD Coachworks brought an extensive selection of its minibus range - mainly Sprinter or VW LT46-based and a smaller VW T5 Transporter.

One of the Sprinters built for London Hire had been built to accessible specification and featured the company's own flat-floor conversion.

The internal floor is raised slightly and the wheel arches removed to allow maximum flexibility in seat positioning and to make loading and unloading much easier when

the seats are removed to accommodate four or more wheelchairs.

To cater for the loss of clearance over the rear wheels, Stanford raises the rear ride height. This compensation also benefits ground clearance for the underfloor passenger lift.

In addition to supplying large numbers of vehicles to London Hire, Stanford has recently picked up orders from Dover-based Britannia and two Sprinters with coach rear-ends for The King's Ferry.



Stanford's flat-floored Sprinter at the show

TEK Seating on its feet for whole show

TUNBRIDGE Wells company TEK Seating didn't get time to sit down over the three days of the show, it says.

"What particularly surprised me was the quality of the enquiries," said MD Paul Fleming. "We had the decision-makers from engineering, and fleet directors. They will

keep our sales team very busy over the next few months."

Among products on show were the GIS Liner seat, with its ability to turn through as much as 180 degrees to face customers, the fold-up RTW1, which keeps space usage to the minimum, and the company's KAB range.

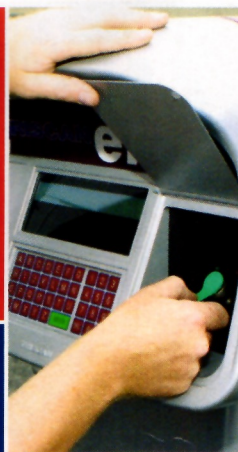
Insurer expands

WRIGHTSURE Group took the opportunity to point out to operators that it is a growing business, with offices in Liverpool, Thurrock and Fareham. The brokerage recently expanded with the acquisition of Lawrie Insurance Consultants, who specialised in PCV insurance making it a natural fit with Wrightsure.

Automatic



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The Kisskey on-board vehicle device identifies the vehicle and fueller/driver and automatically captures the vehicle's mileage at each fuelling to help with BSOG audits.

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Leyland back again

LEYLAND Auto used the show to provide awareness of the array of servicing, parts and remanufacture it can provide.

The company says it now has three divisions employing 100 people, and can tackle work as varied as manufacturing of

starters and alternators, diesel pumps and injectors, the fitting of ancillary equipment including heaters and reversing cameras, and has an extensive parts distribution service.

Based at Bamber Bridge, Preston, Leyland Auto is not just UK based, with its parts distribution extending into Europe.

On the case

BLACKBURN Transport managing director Michael Morton was the winner of

the case of wine in Coach and Bus Week's business card draw. The booze will be winging its way to Mr Morton in time for Christmas.



Transport Secretary Alistair Darling visits the Wrightbus Stand

Lifts with far fewer problems



TONY Baugh, MD of Ricon UK, displayed the company's prototype cassette-mounted underfloor lift, which is scheduled for launch in early 2005.

The unit has been simplified as much as possible to eliminate problem areas, particularly with electrical reliability. The features and functions on the new model are virtually all hydro-mechanical and have just undergone a rigorous and extensive test programme where thousands of raise, lower, deploy and stow cycles have been completed.

The new design is said to save weight and the cassette is around an inch and a half slimmer than competitive units - giving it a distinct advantage with ground clearance. The design also includes a broadly chamfered top section profile instead of the traditional square sided case. This means it provides much easier access to the mounting points and additional clearance around the rear suspension units of popular minibuses.

Mr Baugh said the new lift still required some minor development of the platform and he thought it could even be made to shed some more weight between now and its launch.






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Plaxton planning ahead

PLAXTON was another exhibitor delighted by the response from visitors.

Managing director Brian Davidson said the positive response was very encouraging and indicated there would be some significant announcements in the new year. Interest in the company's Paragon-bodied Iveco EuroRider was also very strong and vindicated the decision to continue building on the chassis.

Smaller buses - such as the Beaver 2 - had sold very well and all the planned production had been snapped up, CBW was told. However, Plaxton has found a source of Mercedes Vario base vehicles from which it proposes to produce a base-specification Beaver that meets DDA requirements.

"We are glad to be here," said Brian Davidson, MD, admitting that Plaxton's presence had been decided late in the day. He said the company was now in the second phase of its redevelopment, having managed to meet delivery targets, and is now "normalising" its relationship with suppliers.

"We are producing quality products, and



all the staff members have taken this issue very much to heart."

He said that forward orders for coaches were

strong, with Cheetah sales on target, and orders placed for ten of its ten-metre Profile coaches, before most operators have even seen the vehicle.



Busy, busy: Plaxton 'pleased to be at show'

PRONTO OFF TO TRANSLINC

An example of Plaxton's new Sprinter-based Pronto was seen on the nearby TransLinc stand. It joins TransLinc's line-up of vehicles it offers to commercial or local authority operators under contract lease or hire agreements



Stedall as she goes...

STEDALL (Vehicle Fittings) of Bristol exhibited an extensive range of vehicle fittings.

The company is one of the largest distributors of component systems to the OE market for the coachbuilding industry. In addition to the comprehensive display, Stedall said it had just completed a significant upgrade in the quality and contents of its website.

This now provides browsers with a range of product information and the option to view the entire catalogue of products on-line. Users can also print pages off in PDF format. They would appreciate customers visiting the website, www.stedall.co.uk, and leaving their views on the 'contact us' page.

DSA schemes

THE Driving Standards Agency explained two driver assessment schemes to operators, urging them to be pro-active.

Driver Quality Monitoring and Occupational Driver Appraisal were being promoted as ways to minimise the risk of accidents and prevent disciplinary action by the traffic commissioner.

Wesley chassis wash well received

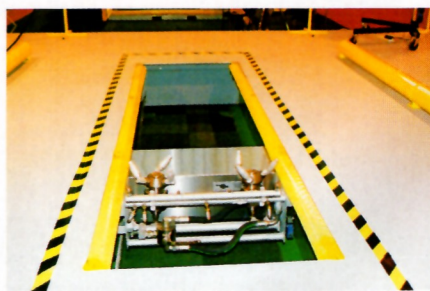
WESLEY Group's first appearance at the show met with significant success - according to spokesman Dermot Walsh.

He said the company's Washman automatic under-chassis wash had attracted a lot of interest and was convinced he would be able to announce a significant order within a few weeks.

Wesley's chassis wash will prepare the underside of a full 12m vehicle to MOT

inspection standards in under 20 minutes. It needs no operative in a pit using a lance and eliminates Health & Safety issues associated with the practice. The company claimed a full wash, using hot water, chemicals, rinsing, electricity costs and effluent disposal, amounted to just £2.50.

An innovative idea most visitors to the stand appreciated was the ability of the wheel guide system to spin. This prevents moving vehicles climbing up onto the guides - which often results in cracking the concrete underneath. The company says in answer to an often-asked question: "Would it be cheaper to just use cold water and avoid the cost of the heating plant?" - "No. Calculations show the process would require almost three times the amount of water, stronger concentration of chemicals and increased effluent disposal charges - making each vehicle cleaning operation disproportionately more expensive."



Hot wash for chassis caught attention

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Fleet upgrades

Rondo selects Setra

EvoBus

HARROGATE-based tour operator Rondo Travel has taken two Setra S315GT HDs to replace its Beulas Irisbus coaches.

The highly-specialised operator, which runs just two vehicles, sets itself very high targets for comfort, as it depends on bespoke tours booked direct by single-interest groups for most of its business. They are very discerning customers, MD John Bullock told *CBW*.

"We work on a five-year maximum age for our vehicles, and our Beulas Stergos were four years old. We had been looking at the 13-metre version of the Beulas but in the end we were sold on the excellent after-sales services offered by EvoBus... they really do

know their products," he said.

Rondo makes the bulk of its turnover from tailored tours booked direct by group clients: "We started in 1986 as a school tour company. These days, we sell across the entire age range of clients," said John, who added that these have even included European Parliamentary members.

Many of the bookings it gets come direct from its website - www.rondotravel.co.uk - and from advertising in group travel magazines, with its own modest tour programme designed purely as infill: "We do some private hire, but nothing else," said John.

The S315s were delivered as 49-seaters but are regularly down-seated to 39 with

tables as required. The coaches have climate control, twin video monitors, drinks station, 240-volt inverters, and additional soft trim on the luggage racks.

"The big, 12-litre engine appealed, too, as it offers relaxed touring and good fuel economy. We are getting more than 12mpg from these vehicles," said John.

Since the summer delivery, Rondo has worked the coaches fairly hard but says they have delivered almost faultless performance: "The only problems we have had have been niggles, and they have been sorted out straight away by EvoBus. Dealing with them has proven a very positive experience," said John.



Eleven Omnicitys go to TWM

Scania Bus and Coach

ELEVEN of these Scania Omnicity articulated buses (below) have joined Travel West Midlands' fleet on a high-frequency route from Castle Vale to Birmingham City Centre.

The 150-passenger vehicles are the first of their type on city services, having previously been bought

only for a Heathrow express route. Showcased at Coach&Bus 2004 (see Show Review pages 23 to 36), the buses carry 54 seated and 90 standing passengers.

The TWM specification includes on-board information systems and CCTV cameras. The unusual 'Spitfire' livery has RAF roundels.



Topping the million

Volvo

A VEHICLE built no fewer than 14 years ago is still in the Dudley's fleet and still proving its worth.

The Paramount 3500 was equipped with Britain's favourite chassis - Volvo's B10M mid-engined workhorse and, a million kilometers on, is still going strong. And that's not all: "It's hard to believe that, despite all that mileage, we have never had a spanner on the engine," said workshop manager Barry Gallagher.

That's not to say the mechanics at Dudleys, based in Worcestershire, haven't given the vehicle their full attention. It has been serviced regularly and had a set of new injectors.

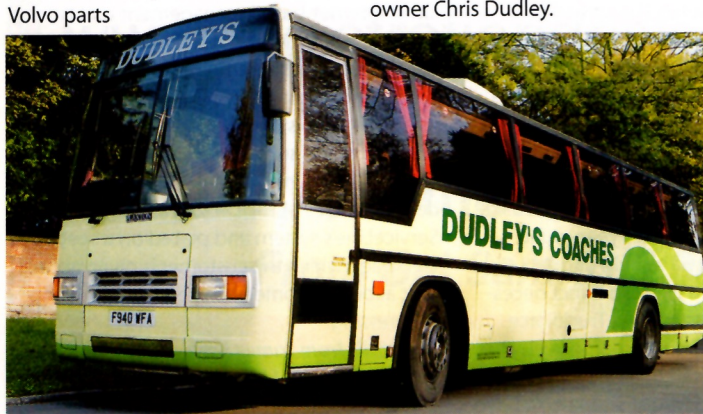
"We have only ever used Genuine Volvo parts

provided by our local dealer, Hartshorne, and I am convinced this has been a major factor in the vehicle's success," said Mr Gallagher.

F940 WFA - no hiding behind 'cherished' plates - was first registered in 1990 and joined Dudleys in 1996. It's in standard trim, with the legendary Volvo engine plus an EGS G7 electro-mechanical gearbox.

The family business based in Inkberrow has traded since 1938, but has only been running coaches since the 1950s. These days, it's built up a fleet of 20 vehicles, most of which are Volvos.

"Reliability is vitally important and this particular coach is remarkable. With such a fantastic performance, no wonder I like my Volvos," said owner Chris Dudley.



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What's new

Help for tired drivers

A NEW EDITION of the Driver Reviver, the CD that helps tired drivers get a 15-minute power nap, has been released by AWAKE, the sleep and fatigue research organisation linked to the Loughborough Sleep Research Centre.

AWAKE MD Dr Paul Jackson said: "The response to Driver Reviver has been remarkable - companies have been ordering 100s at a time for their fleets of company car drivers.

"Although Driver Reviver was originally intended for use in the car, when we surveyed our customers we found that a large proportion were also using it in other situations.

"They found the pink noise so relaxing that they wanted to be able to play it for much

longer - we even had one customer who wanted to play it all night to block out the noise of passing lorries outside his bedroom window.

"The new version of the CD enables the listener to put the pink noise on repeat, so it will play for as long as you like. We have also worked with a leading sound engineer to make the pink noise even more relaxing.

"Although he was more used to working with rock bands his experience was invaluable in creating the perfect version of pink noise to maximise its relaxing properties. He joked that if we sold a few more copies the Driver Reviver could be the Christmas Number 1."

AWAKE is a British research consultancy

linked to the world-renowned Loughborough Sleep Research Centre. In December 2003 it was awarded the Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Award for work to raise awareness of the dangers of driver tiredness.

AWAKE also undertakes risk assessments to determine the extent to which fatigue plays a part in a company's accidents as well as providing training for commercial drivers and others involved in safety critical work.

● **The Driver Reviver CD is available priced £11.95 plus 1.25 P&P, either direct from the organisation at 4 Percy Street, London, W1T 1DF, telephone 0207 693 6165, e-mail info@awakeltd.info or from website www.awakeltd.info**



Thousandth site milestone

INDEPENDENT fuel retailer and bunkering specialist CH Jones has achieved a milestone in its expansion with the opening of its 1,000th site.

The latest venture is based at Preston and owned by Petrol Express.

The company has established a strong supply network of fuelling sites on key routes around the country. This allows drivers to take advantage of sites all under the same ownership and simplify accounting procedures for the operator by dealing with a single source.

Above: CH Jones celebrates 1000 fuel sites

Changes at First Choice Clothing

FIRST CHOICE Clothing Limited has changed its name to FCC Ltd - coinciding with a move to new premises on November 1.

The company specialises in corporate workwear and supplies many local government organisations with high-quality, value-for-money uniform clothing.

The move is designed to enhance customer service and there is now a showroom where a large selection of clothing can be examined, or, by appointment, customers can discuss uni-

form requirements with sales staff.

Coupled with the relocation, First Choice Clothing Ltd has invested heavily in new machinery and computerised equipment to improve turnaround times and increase service levels.

● **Details from FCC Ltd, Green Lane Dyeworks, Yeadon, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS19 7XP, tel 0113 391 0440, fax 0113 391 0550, e-mail sales@firstchoice-clothing.co.uk or website www.firstchoice-clothing.co.uk**

Goodyear Dunlop expands services

GOODYEAR DUNLOP has expanded its range of customer support services to offer coach and bus fleet operators an extended package of back-up, roadside assistance and tyre management facilities.

In early 2004 the company opened up 1,100 TruckForce service centres across the UK and Europe on all major routes. The spread in Europe extends from Portugal to Turkey and from Finland to Italy. By the end of 2005 the number of centres should be extended a further 40%. The centres are staffed by dedicated commercial tyre technicians fully trained in the requirements of coach and bus operators.

ServiceLine 24h is the new 24-hour roadside assistance package. It provides year-round cover and is managed via a multi-lingual Incident Control Centre that can direct necessary assistance from the nearest TruckForce location and provides a single point of contact for operators or their staff. Staff members monitor any breakdown situations and keep all par-

ties informed on progress via SMS messages to drivers and voice calls to the customer.

Part of ServiceLine's function is to provide advice on VAT recovery. Its centralised control function has agreed terms with regional revenue collectors and can optimise VAT recovery for the customer. FleetOnlineSolutions is the latest Internet-based management tool linking the operator with Goodyear Dunlop and designed to simplify administration of tyre management contracts.

RoadsideAssistanceSolutions is the newest addition to the support services and complements ServiceLine 24h. In the event of an incident, all stages of the call-out are logged to ServiceLine's system and placed on a special web page which the customer is given access to. It allows customers to see how the work is progressing.

● **Details from James Bailey, Goodyear Dunlop Tyres UK Ltd, tel 0121 306 6328, e-mail jbailey@goodyear.com**

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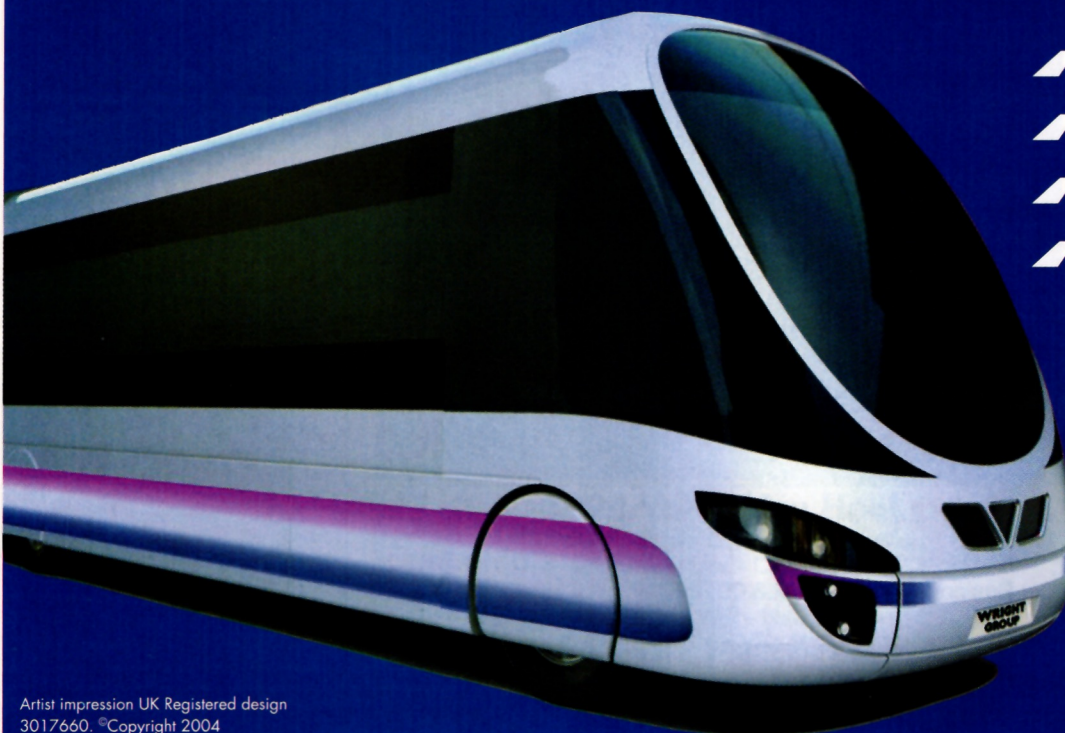
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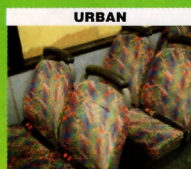
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APPOINTMENTS & TENDERS

**D&G Coach and Bus Ltd
General Manager**

Since its formation in 1998 the company has shown continual growth such that it currently operates over 65 buses and employs over 95 staff. This medium sized company is looking for further growth and a Bus Professional to lead on an opportunity that has recently arisen.

This exciting opportunity will be demanding and will require someone with dedication and commitment as well as thorough knowledge and understanding of all aspects relating to Bus Operation. It is likely that the successful candidate will be able to work within cost constraints and to develop systems, which enable that function.

The salary will reflect the seniority of this position. Candidates should forward their CV together with details of their current salary to: **Mr D. Reeves, Managing Director, D&G Coach and Bus Ltd, 26 The Meadows, Kingstone, Uttroter ST14 8QE.**

Please ring Mr Reeves on 01782 332337 for an informal discussion about this role.

9176/TEN



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You should have PCV experience and a sound knowledge of current statutory and HSE requirements. You must be self motivated and able to demonstrate your management and budgetary skills as well as ensure compliance to all of the companies standard operating procedures. Leadership skills are essential as is the focus on achieving results.

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Stephen Smith, Managing Director, First, Westway, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3AR

Closing date for applications 30th November 2004.

Please visit our website at for more information on the company or to apply online.

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TENDERS

**COMPASS TRAVEL****Operations Manager
Worthing, Sussex**

A vacancy has arisen to play a major role in our friendly company which operates 43 buses and coaches on a mixture of local bus services, contracts and private hire.

A team player with proven management experience, you will be highly motivated with good people skills and willing to adopt a hands-on approach to the operational management of the company. A PCV licence is essential. In return you will be rewarded with an excellent remuneration package commensurate with your skills and experience.

Please forward a copy of your CV and covering letter by 25th November to: Chris Chatfield, Compass Travel, Faraday Close, Durrington, Worthing, West Sussex BN13 3RB

9162/TEN

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APPOINTMENTS & TENDERS

Operations Manager**Andover**

Due to reorganisation within Stagecoach a vacancy has arisen for this challenging position. Reporting to the Operations Director, you will be responsible for the operational success of the depot, which runs 33 vehicles and employs 60 staff.

Particular emphasis is placed on service quality and reliability, together with recruitment, retention and management of staff. Close co-operation with your engineering team is required to ensure the overall success of the operation.

A competitive salary, with benefits, is offered, together with relocation expenses if applicable.

Applications, including your CV and a statement of why you feel you will be successful in the post, should be sent to Mr P Medicott, Operations Director, Stagecoach South, The Bus Station, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8DG.

Email: phil.medlicott@stagecoachbus.com

Closing date: Friday, 2nd December 2004.

www.stagecoachgroup.com

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9188/TEN



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